

REMARKS

Claims 1-83 are pending. Claims 1-8, 10, 12, 34-40, 42, 44, and 46 including independent claims 1 and 34 are rejected. Claims 14-33 and 47-83 are allowed. Claims 9, 11, 13, 41, 43, and 45 are objected to. The Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of claims 14-33 and 47-83 and the allowability of claims 9, 11, 13, 41, 43, and 45.

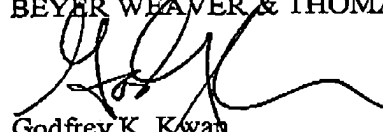
Independent claims 1 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Rabenko (USP 6,763,032). Rabenko describes a system for synchronizing "a clock of the subscriber with respect to a clock of the headend" (Abstract). "Time slots which define the maintenance region 116 are optionally provided in a MAP 113. Such maintenance regions 116 may be utilized, for example, to facilitate the synchronization of the clocks of the CMs with the clock of the CMTS. Such synchronization is necessary in order to assure that each CM 1046 transmits only within its allocated time slots, as defined by each CM's transmit opportunity 114" (column 7, line 66 – column 8, line 6). "Guard bands are optionally provided at the beginning and end of each slot, so as to decrease the precision with which time synchronization between the CMTS and each CM must be performed. Thus, by providing such guard bands, some leeway is provided in the transmit time during which each CM inserts its data packet into the upstream channel 119" (column 8, lines 34-38).

However, Rabenko does not teach or suggest providing "a common clock reference signal to the local clock circuitry in selected network devices to thereby cause each of the selected network devices including one or more fiber nodes to be synchronized to the common clock reference signal" as recited in independent claims 1 and 34. Rabenko only describes synchronization of the clocks of the CMs with the clock of the CMTS. Fiber nodes are not even mentioned in Rabenko.

In light of the above remarks relating to independent claims 1 and 34, the remaining dependent claims are believed allowable for at least the reasons noted above.

Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully request a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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